WEC Equitable Faculty Hiring Checklist

Based on recommendations from the [University of Michigan STRIDE Handbook for Faculty Searches and Hiring](#), [Strategies to improve equity in faculty hiring](#) by Needhi Bhalla, and the [Oregon State University Search Advocate Program](#).

Forming The Search Committee

- ❏ Select a diverse search committee that recognizes and supports the department's goal of improving equity, inclusion, and diversity.
- ❏ Ensure that the entire committee has completed the IFAS training for equitable faculty searches and has reviewed this material recently.
- ❏ Have the committee review this checklist.

Developing The Position

Generate a clear understanding of how the position fits with broad departmental goals, needs, and requirements for the position.

- ❏ Review the broad departmental mission and goals.
- ❏ Obtain external requirements for the position.
- ❏ Obtain/determine departmental needs for the position.
- ❏ Discuss the ways that departmental needs and requirements can be met while accomplishing the goals and mission of the department including equity and inclusion.
- ❏ Define the position in the widest possible terms consistent with the needs and requirements.
- ❏ Develop a matrix that captures the key aspects of the position, their relative priorities, and the variety of ways candidates can demonstrate needed competencies.
- ❏ Establish criteria and procedures for reviewing applications and interviewing candidates. Determine how the matrix will be applied and how phone and in-person interviews will be conducted. Doing this before advertising ensures that the process reflects agreed upon needs and reduces bias by setting priorities before viewing applications, which helps reduce implicit bias.

Writing The Ad

Develop a broad ad that reflects the position developed in *Developing The Position* and communicates the department's commitment to equitable hiring and inclusive work environments.

- ❏ Use the matrix from *Developing The Position* to guide development of the ad to ensure it matches assessment of applications.
- ❏ Communicate required materials and provide guidelines for what they should include:
    - ❏ Cover letter
    - ❏ CV
    - ❏ List of references with contact information
    - ❏ Diversity Statement
    - ❏ Research Statement (if there is a research split)
    - ❏ Teaching Statement (if there is a teaching split)
    - ❏ Extension Statement (if there is an extension split)
- ❏ Convey departmental goals for improving equity, inclusion, and diversity and the importance of furthering these goals as a central component of the position.
- ❏ Provide clear descriptions of what should be present in each aspect of the packet. This provides transparency and ensures everyone can present their best application.
- ❏ Minimize required qualifications and describe the position in the widest possible terms consistent with the needs and requirements. Broad positions with limited requirements are known to increase the diversity of applicant pools, but it is also important to be explicit about the scope of the search.
- ❏ Emphasize the breadth of ways that applicants can demonstrate experience and expertise.
- ❏ Obtain feedback on the ad from the department.
- ❏ Before finalizing the ad, check that any changes reflect needs and goals of the department and, if necessary, update the matrix to reflect any shifts in priorities.

Advertising

Generate a large, diverse, applicant pool with candidates that fit departmental goals/needs and are likely to be successful in the position.

- ❏ Advertise the position broadly:
    - ❏ Research- and domain-specific venues
    - ❏ Venues that actively reach underrepresented candidates
    - ❏ Twitter, using appropriate hashtags to reach underrepresented communities
- ❏ Identify and individually contact potential applicants and encourage them to apply:
    - ❏ Researchers from labs with expertise that fit the goals and needs of the position
    - ❏ Researchers from underrepresented groups

Reviewing applications

Identify candidates with the potential to meet departmental needs and goals and contribute positively to the broad mission of the department.

- ❏ Review the matrix, assessment criteria, and procedures to ensure that candidates are assessed fairly based on the job description.
- ❏ Assign multiple committee members to review each application.
- ❏ Provide committee members sufficient time to thoroughly review each application and score each candidate using the matrix and criteria described above in *Developing the Position.* Implicit biases are more likely to influence decisions when made quickly or under stress.
- ❏ Discuss applications that have good support from the matrix of at least one committee member. Discussing applicants with mixed support can help identify strong candidates with unique skills, experiences, and backgrounds that were initially missed by some committee members.
- ❏ Select candidates for interviews that provide the best match with the goals, needs, and qualifications specified in the job description and the matrix. It is important to ground these decisions in the originally agreed upon criteria to reduce the influence of implicit bias and ensure that all candidates have the opportunity to provide the best possible application for the position. Disagreements about criteria should be resolved by reviewing initial documents and discussions.

Communicating With Applicants

Communicate actively and transparently with applicants to build trust and develop a positive departmental reputation. Prepare material in advance so that rapid and consistent responses can be sent to all applicants.

- ❏ Respond quickly to questions from candidates during the application process.
- ❏ Prepare courteous form letters that can be sent in a timely fashion to keep applicants updated on the status of the search.
- ❏ Provide information to *all* applicants at multiple stages in the search process including:
    - ❏ Generation of the long lists and short lists
    - ❏ Contacting references
    - ❏ Interview decisions
    - ❏ Initial offer
- ❏ Prepare an information packet for interviewees that includes information about the location and accessibility of interview locations, requesting disability accommodations, and general information on family-friendly policies, benefits, and dual career services.

Interviewing

Ensure an equitable two-way interview process where all candidates have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their expertise and experience; and concomitantly obtain information about how the university, department, and position align with their career and life goals. The interview

process should demonstrate the department's broader goals, mission, and inclusive work environment.

- ❏ Determine the key components of the interview needed for candidates to demonstrate their ability to fulfill the goals and needs identified in the matrix and the job description. These may include a research seminar, a teaching demonstration or discussion, stakeholder meetings, and group meetings to discuss equity and inclusion.
- ❏ When organizing meetings for candidates: 1) Ask the candidate if there are specific people with whom they would like to meet, both inside and outside the department; 2) Include a diverse group of department members that represents the diversity of the department (including race, gender, sexuality, and professional status); 3) Include department members who represent the departmental commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive work environment. Representing diversity and demonstrating inclusive environments can help recruit underrepresented candidates.
- ❏ Seek candidate input in making travel arrangements to ensure efficient safe and efficient travel and to accommodate personal schedules.
- ❏ Provide detailed agendas well in advance of the interview. Short preparation times provide an advantage to candidates with prior experience interviewing in academia.
- ❏ Communicate the goals and process of the interview and associated expectations well in advance. Do not assume all candidates understand the goal of different aspects of the interview.
- ❏ Discuss how new faculty are supported and departmental approaches to providing inclusive environments for students and employees.
- ❏ Obtain faculty feedback immediately after each interview using a structured feedback form to help focus responses on expertise and experience related to the goals and needs specified in the matrix and job description.

Decision making

Making final determinations about which candidate exhibited the best fit with the mission and goals specified in the job description and ad for the particular position.

- ❏ After interviews, but before discussing candidates, revisit the ad, goals of the position, and breadth of approaches to demonstrating competencies. Do not add new needs or qualifications. Doing so can result in implicit bias changing assessment of candidates and is not fair to other candidates who have not had the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities because the need/qualification was not presented as important.
- ❏ Review the pre-interview evaluation of the candidate's written materials and references. Evaluation of interview candidates should actively incorporate this initial assessment, which may be less susceptible to implicit bias in-person interactions that occur during interviews.

- ❑ Discuss the candidates as a committee to assess how well they meet the position needs and broader departmental goals. Do not consider whether or not a person would accept the position.
- ❑ Solicit feedback from staff and students.
- ❑ Prepare summaries of the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate, focused on the specified needs and goals for presentation to the department.
- ❑ Lead a departmental discussion of the candidates. This discussion should start with a summary of the specified needs and goals associated with the position as well as their relative priority. For each candidate, the committee should present its summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate and solicit feedback from the department, ensuring that discussions of candidates focus on the needs and goals reviewed at the beginning. This discussion should include student and staff representatives.
- ❑ **Department Chair:** Conduct a faculty vote that includes: 1) Whether each candidate is acceptable or unacceptable; and 2) Ranking of candidates for individually identified needs and goals, not overall. General impressions are more likely to be influenced by implicit bias and "feeling comfortable" with candidates.
- ❑ **Department Chair:** Synthesize faculty, student and staff input with voting results and determine to which candidate the initial offer will be made.
- ❑ **Department Chair:** Provide to the faculty a summary of voting results and a written description of how they were used to make offer decisions.